

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (original): An apparatus for stacking semiconductor wafers, comprising:

a housing configured to releasably maintain a plurality of semiconductor wafers in fixed positions relative to said housing;

a transfer guide proximate to the housing, **the transfer guide configured to facilitate the transfer of the plurality of semiconductor wafers into the housing;** and

a member configured to detach the semiconductor wafers from the housing so as to collect the semiconductor wafers into a stack.

Claim 2 (original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the housing further comprises a plurality of supports, each support configured to maintain one of the semiconductor wafers in a fixed position, and to release said one of the semiconductor wafers onto the stack

Claim 3 (original): The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said each support is a flexible support configured to deform so as to flexibly release said one of the semiconductor wafers onto the stack.

Claim 4 (original): The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said each support is configured to pivotably release said one of the semiconductor wafers onto the stack.

Claim 5 (original): The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a transfer arm for directing the plurality of wafers through the transfer guide and into the housing.

Claim 6 (original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the member is a basket configured to move within the housing so as to detach the semiconductor wafers from the housing and collect the semiconductor wafers into the stack.

Claim 7 (original): The apparatus of claim 6 further comprising a lift attached to the basket, the lift configured to move the basket within the housing so as to detach the semiconductor wafers from the housing and collect the semiconductor wafers into the stack.

Claim 8 (original): An apparatus for stacking semiconductor wafers, comprising:
a housing having supports for releasably engaging a plurality of semiconductor wafers; and
a basket configured to receive said plurality of semiconductor wafers, said basket further
configured to disengage said wafers from said supports, and to manipulate said wafers into a
stack.

Claim 9 (original): The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said supports are flexible supports further
configured to deform so as to flexibly release said plurality of semiconductor wafers onto said stack.

Claim 10 (original): The apparatus of claim 9 further comprising a lift, the lift being attached to
said basket and configured to move said basket against said wafers so as to as to release said wafers
from said supports and onto said stack.

Claim 11 (original): The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said supports are further configured to
pivotably release said plurality of semiconductor wafers onto said stack.

Claim 12 (original): The apparatus of claim 11 further comprising a lift, the lift being attached to
said basket and configured to move said basket against said wafers so as to as to release said wafers
from said supports and onto said stack.

Claim 13 (original): The apparatus of claim 8 further comprising a guide for facilitating the
transfer of said wafers into said housing and onto said supports.

Claim 14 (original): The apparatus of claim 13 further comprising a receptacle configured to
receive a semiconductor wafer cassette, wherein said guide facilitates the transfer of said wafers
from said wafer cassette into said housing.

Claim 15 (original): The apparatus of claim 14 further comprising a transfer arm for directing said
wafers through said guide and into said housing.

Claim 16 (original): A method of stacking semiconductor wafers, comprising:

positioning a plurality of semiconductor wafers proximate to a housing, the housing having top and bottom openings and a side opening enabling ingress of wafers into the housing, the housing further including supports configured to releasably hold the plurality of semiconductor wafers;

transferring the plurality of semiconductor wafers into the housing by pushing the wafers through a transfer guide that directs the wafers through the side opening onto the supports so that the wafers are releasably held by the supports within the housing;

releasing the plurality of semiconductor wafers from the supports so as to collect the plurality of semiconductor wafers into a stack.

Claim 17 (original): The method of claim 16 wherein said releasing further comprises flexibly releasing the plurality of semiconductor wafers from flexible supports and onto said stack.

Claim 18 (original): The method of claim 16 wherein said releasing further comprises pivotably releasing the plurality of semiconductor wafers from pivotable supports and onto said stack.

Claim 19 (cancelled).

Claim 20 (new): The apparatus of Claim 1 wherein the housing is configured with a side opening arranged adjacent to the transfer guide so that wafers can be transferred through the guide and through the side opening into the housing.

Claim 21 (new): The apparatus of claim 20 further comprising a lift member for elevating upward through the housing pushing the wafers upward and releasing the wafers from the housing as the lift member elevates thereby stacking the wafers as the lift member is elevated.

Claim 22 (new): The method of claim 16 wherein said releasing comprises lifting the wafers from the supports using a lift driven support that passes upward through the interior of the housing stacking the wafers one after the other as the lift rises.